SONNY BOY'S DAY *at the* ZOO

Verses By

ELLA BENTLEY ARTHUR

Illustrations By

STANLEY CLISBY ARTHUR

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SONNY BOY'S DAY AT THE ZOO

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VERSES BY
ELLA BENTLEY ARTHUR

ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY
STANLEY CLISBY ARTHUR

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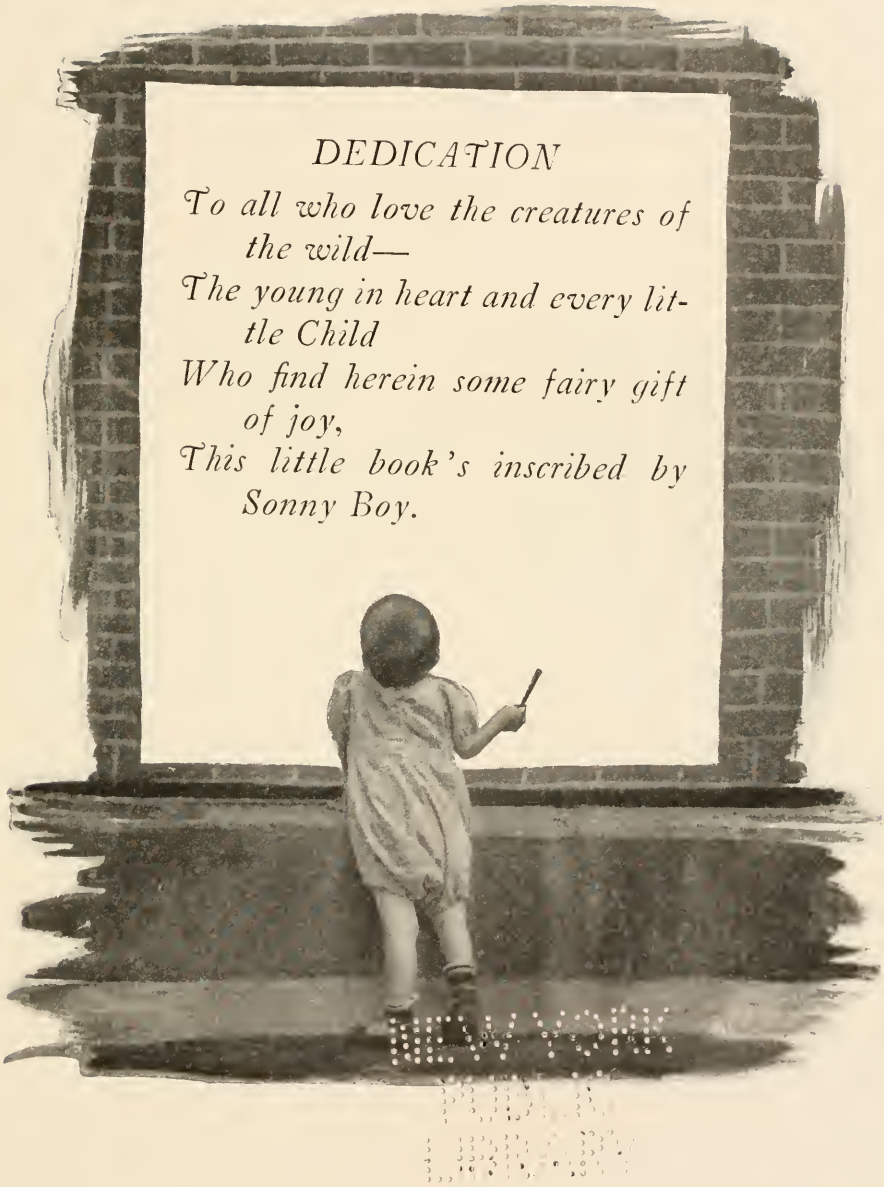

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FOREWORD

This book goes from the heart of a little child to all other children, with the hope that they will learn to know and love, as he does, all the beasties pictured in it. The hero of it is a very real small boy, who had the good fortune to be born just without the tall iron fence that shuts in the wonderful collection of animals from every part of the earth, that have been gathered together in the New York Zoölogical Park.

Sonny Boy's first recollections are of spending long summer days by the paddocks in which huge elephants swung heavily from side to side, and told each other of memories of the jungle; or by the caves where the great polar bears panted amidst their cakes of ice; or by tanks in which hideous hippopotami puffed and dived; or in the snake house where beautiful and repulsive reptiles glided and quivered and coiled, and flattened their poisonous heads against the heavy glass that shut them in, and so before he could even talk Sonny Boy was a learned zoölogist.

Whether the grizzly bear taught Sonny Boy the Master Word of all the peoples of the forest, and water, and air, of the torrid tropics and the Arctic snows, as Baloo did Mowgli, we do not know, for Sonny Boy cannot yet speak plainly enough to explain these mysteries. Certainly, however, from the first he was entirely en rapport with all the wild creatures of the Zoo. They adopted him as their friend, they fed out of his tiny hand, and he would spend hours gurgling at them from his perambulator, or holding on to the railings of their cages with his

baby fist while they grunted confidences to him that appeared to be mutually entertaining and delightful.

It was in such moments of heart-to-heart talks between Sonny Boy and his comrades of the wild that his father caught them with the camera, and his mother sang the Saga of what she thinks they told each other. But that's just as she imagined it, because only Sonny Boy really knows what he said to Flip, the Walrus, and what Flip answered back; or what Baldy, who dresses like a gentleman, told him when they took their walks together, hand-in-hand, as you see them in the picture.

Of course this book isn't intended for grown ups, but if they—with the pernicious curiosity that grown ups have—will pry between the covers, they will find the most remarkable collection of animal pictures they have ever seen, because all the pictures are photographed from life. Also the grown ups who are interested in the theory of evolution will find much to ponder upon in the picture of Sonny Boy and the great monkey coming down the road together, as Mr. Darwin believed that humanity came down the path of life. The picture might be labeled "The Descent of Man."

But Sonny Boy does not bother his golden head about such trivial matters. It is enough for him that the faces of all the animals are his friends. He knows them by name, and so he sends out this little book by way of invitation to all other children to come and spend a happy day with him at the Zoo.

DOROTHY DIX.

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SONNY BOY'S DAY AT THE ZOO

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

NOW once there was a little boy
As good as forty pies,
With heart so brimming full of joy
It sparkled in his eyes.

And when he came from Babyland
Where all the kiddies grow,
His father took his tiny hand
And softly said, "I know

"That all the creatures tame or wild
That bray or bark or whine,
Are going to love my little child—
This Sonny Boy of mine."

So when he grew to sober years
(That is, when he was two,)
In rompers, as he thus appears,
He visited the Zoo.

While bird and beast in every cage
All greeted him with joy,
And here they 're pictured page by page
Along with Sonny Boy.

So if you 're good as forty pies,
(Or even one or two)
Just make believe, with fast shut eyes,
You 're really at the Zoo.

CHIMPANZEE

THE INTELLIGENT MONKEY
FROM AFRICA

OME shake my hand, please, Sonny Boy,
And say "How do you do!"
I 'm Baldy, and my pranks give joy
To little chaps like you.

With other monkeys long ago
In forests far away,
I swung from tree to tree and—oh,
I had such fun all day.

No white-skinned child I 'd ever see
But babies black and brown,
Who romped and ran and mimicked me
In far off Jungle Town.

LION

THE BIG CAT FROM AFRICA

THE lion is the king of beasts,
And though he wears no crown,
You ought to see the royal feasts
He loves to gobble down:

Gazelles and antelopes and deer
He slays and eats with joy;
"I really feel restricted here!"
Said he to Sonny Boy.

"But though you gaze at me with awe
And think me fierce to see,
The master of my kind you are—
The Man you 're going to be!"

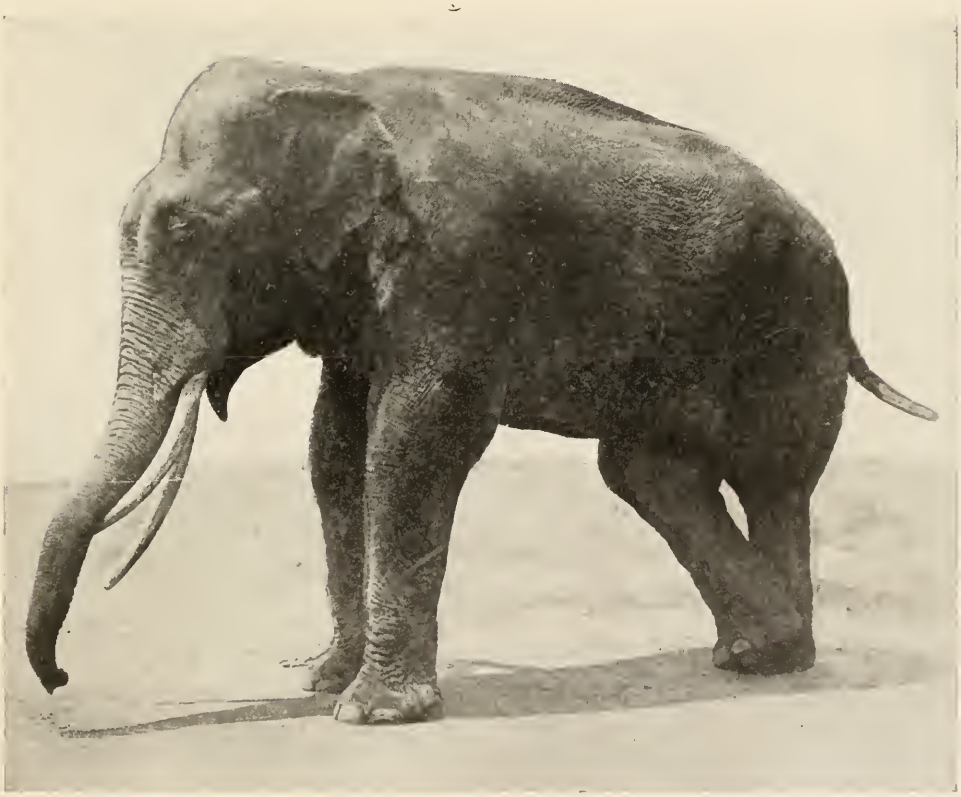
ELEPHANT

THE LARGEST ANIMAL
IN THE WORLD

MY papa calls you pachyderm,
But, goodness knows, I can't
See why he uses such a term
When he means elephant.

You 've monstrous ears, and tiny eyes,
Your ivory tusks are curled,
I think—you 're such a giant size—
You 're big as all the world.

And as you swing and sway and dip
Somehow, you seem to me
Just like a huge and bulky ship
That 's anchored out at sea.



PUMA

THE MOUNTAIN LION
OF AMERICA

QUOTH Sonny to the Puma, "What
A handsome chap are you,
And what a lovely coat you 've got,
How well it fits you, too!

"They say you hunt and climb and that
You 're lithe as you are slim,
And you 're a most unusual cat
Because you love to swim."

OSTRICH

THE GIANT BIRD FROM AFRICA

FAR faster than a horse can run
Across the desert sands,
The ostrich speeds from sun to sun
In distant tropic lands.

How long his legs! how long his neck!
  How haughtily he stares—
He knows, of course, his feathers deck
  The hat my mother wears.

AXIS DEER

THE HANDSOME DEER OF INDIA

I THINK your coat from golden rays
By fairy-folk was spun;
It 's like a leaf of Autumn days
All mottled with the sun.

And softer than a summer's night
Your eyes look forth at me,
As if you hungered for the right
To roam the forests—*free!*

HIPPOPOTAMUS

THE RIVER HORSE OF AFRICA

HEN Sonny gazed at fat old Pete
So huge of mouth and head,
So ponderous of form and feet
He thought awhile and said:

"It twists my little tongue awry
Your great long name to say,
And often I have wondered why
They called you such a way.

"But now I see you 're fashioned thus
I know how it occurred,
They named you Hip-po-pot-a-mus
Because you look the word."

CAMEL

THE DESERT ANIMAL FROM ASIA

HERE is the camel, and I know
How useful camels are,
For over burning sands they go
In desert lands afar.

And they may cross the arid waste
  With neither food nor drink—
No smallest sip or tiny taste
  Of anything, I think.

I like this gentle mother one
  Who seems so full of pride
And gazes with such love upon
  The baby at her side.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN GOAT

THE NIMBLE-FOOTED GOAT OF NORTH AMERICA

YOU 'RE fleet of foot and white of coat
And how you jump and run!
I think a Rocky Mountain goat
Must have a lot of fun.

I 'd love to leap from lofty heights
  Of mountain tops o'erhead;
I sometimes dream I do at nights
  And tumble out of bed!

POLAR BEAR

THE WHITE BEAR FROM THE FARTHEST NORTH

YOU look just like my Teddy bear!"
Cried Sonny with delight,
"And you come from the country where
The sunbeams shine at night.

"You think the weather, I suppose,
Extremely mild and nice
Whenever my wee nose and toes
Are cold as blocks of ice.

"For in your country far away,
Where I would surely freeze,
It 's fun for you to hunt and play
In icy Arctic seas."

TIGER

THE STRIPED JUNGLE
CAT OF ASIA

OU 'RE beautiful to look upon,
All clad in black and gold,
But oh, you make me want to run
You seem so fierce and bold.

For though you 're like a pussy cat
  And even mew and purr,
I 'm certain, Mister Tiger, that
  I would n't stroke your fur!

TORTOISE

THE OLDEST CREATURE IN THE ZOO

OOD morning, Mr. Tortoise! Well,
I 've heard of you before,
They say you 've dwelt within this shell
Four centuries or more.

"But whether times are dull or not,
You prosper," Sonny said,
"Because, you see, you 've always got
A roof above your head.

"And strange, indeed, must I appear
To one like you, I know,
Who played with dinosauria
In ages long ago."

KANGAROO

THE GREAT JUMPER FROM AUSTRALIA

I DO not run nor swim nor fly,
I neither climb nor creep,
But when I want to travel, why,
I simply take a leap.

I need n't keep a level head,
  But I must never fail,
When bounding forth to keep instead
  A very level tail.

WOLF

THE GRAY SKULKER OF THE AMERICAN TIMBERLANDS

FROM out your lair at close of day
With thoughts of prey to seize,
A slender streak of twilight gray
You stole among the trees.

But now behind these prison bars
  I know, in savage mood,
You long for nights beneath the stars
  With your wild brotherhood.

And when you prick your ears and seem
  To scent the passing wind,
Perhaps you 're hearing in a dream
  The calling of your kind!

RHINOCEROS

THE THICK-SKINNED BEAST FROM INDIA

ELL, Sonny Boy, in me you see
A very misfit beast,
The jungle tailor measured me
For twice my size at least.

And 't was some error, I suppose,
  My nose to thus adorn,
So every time I blow my nose
  I have to blow a horn!

I 'm minus grace and bulk I 'm plus,
  My eyes are merest slits,
Alas! my name, Rhinoceros,
  Is all of me that fits!

ELK

THE WAPITI DEER OF NORTH AMERICA

"AN Elk I wish that I could be,"
Said Sonny Boy, "because
Your antlers, like a Christmas tree,
Seem placed for Santa Claus.

"But as I want a pair of wings,
Why, then I fear I 'd find
Those antlers rather weighty things
To carry on one's mind!"

WALRUS

THE SWIMMER FROM THE ARCTIC SEAS

OH, you 're the baby Walrus, Flip,
I knew you by your wheeze,
Your *gurgle-gargle*, *puff-f-f* and *zip!*
(To speak in Walrusese.)

But my! if handsome is as does,
  Which always is the case,
You 've been a naughty Flip, because
  I see it in your face!

ZEBRA

THE STRIPED HORSE
FROM AFRICA

"HY, horsey, you 've the quaintest clothes
I ever saw before!"
Cried Sonny Boy, "You 're like the hose
My great-grandmother wore.

"Of peppermint you make me think,
A barber's pole, beside,
Or rather, you 're like printer's ink
Which all in stripes has dried.

"And now I 've said what I have said;
Have you no word to say?"
The Zebra shook his striped head
And merely answered "*Neigh!*"

MACAW

THE PARROT
FROM TROPICAL AMERICA

ONG, long before I wandered in
I heard your raucous noise;
It seems to me for deafening din
You 're worse than little boys.

And you 're the gossip of the Zoo,
You talky, squawky bird,
For I 'm informed you 're given to
Repeating what you 've heard.

TAPIR

THE JUNGLE BEAST
FROM BORNEO

'M like an Elephant whose trunk
Has just begun to sprout,
Or rather, one that 's badly shrunk
From swimming much, no doubt.

For oh, I love the water so
  I very often wish
That fins instead of hoofs I 'd grow,
  And turn into a fish!

GIRAFFE

THE TALLEST ANIMAL
IN THE WORLD

THE long Giraffe, with length'ning grin
Remarked, "You look so small,
I wonder, Sonny, how your kin
Discovered you at all.

"But then, I am the tallest beast
Afoot, afloat, a-wing,
And you to insect eyes at least
May seem a monster thing.

"And so you see, my little friend,
What e'er you say or do,
'T is plain these matters all depend
Upon the point of view."

WILD BOAR

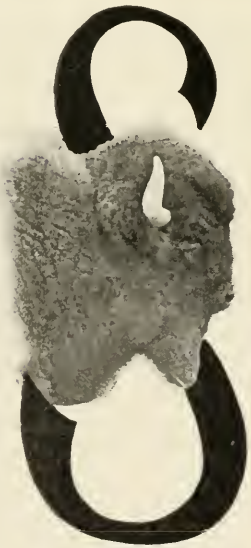
THE UGLY WART HOG OF AFRICA

'VE often heard of Bores before,
Both little ones and big,
But seeing you I know that "Boar"
Is just polite for "pig."

The way you greeted me, I knew
Your origin at once,
For little porkers talk like you
In funny squeaks and grunts.

BUFFALO

THE MIGHTY BISON
OF THE AMERICAN PLAINS



SOMETIMES your thoughts go back, I know,
To lands you loved the best
Where you were free to come and go
In your untrammeled West.

Your air, like some imprisoned king,
  Your pride and poise all show
That Nature made a noble thing
  To call a Buffalo.

PELICAN

THE FISH EATING BIRD FROM AFRICA

I NEVER saw a bird until
I visited the Zoo,
Who seemed to smile with all his bill
And both his eyes, like you.

You look so shy and quaint and dear,
  I cannot credit quite
The very fishy tales I hear
  About your appetite!

GRIZZLY BEAR

THE SAVAGE BRUIN OF THE SIERRAS

YOU Grizzly folk are very rough
And give such bear-like hugs.
You make me think of Mama's muff
Or very lively rugs.

But when the wintry winds do blow
With harsh and bitter note,
It 's nice to be a bear, I know,
Tucked in a Grizzly coat!

G N U

THE WILDEBEEST
OF SOUTH AFRICA

SEE you gazing, Sonny dear,
In such a puzzled way;
"A horse with horns and beard, how
queer!"
I think I hear you say.

From far off Africa I came
  To dwell within the Zoo
And I 've the strangest kind of name—
  For I am called the Gnu.

LLAMA

THE HUMPLESS CAMEL
FROM SOUTH AMERICA

NOW, here 's a beast that 's mighty queer—
Indeed, you look to me
A cross between a goat and deer
Of camel ancestry.

In all this vast enclosure, none
Like you have I beheld
And surely you were named by one
Who stuttered when he spelled!

AOUDAD

THE BARBARY WILD SHEEP OF NORTHERN AFRICA

BAA—Baa—Barbary Wild Sheep, pray
And have you any wool?
I think that you might answer, "Yea,
A chest that 's over-full."

I wish that I could be like you
With such a fleecy skin
And wear my woolen garments, too,
Outside instead of in!

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DINGO

THE LITTLE WILD DOG
OF AUSTRALIA

"EAR me, but what a funny paw!"
Cried Dingo, "I opine
Some beastie new and strange you are,
Pray, do you bark or whine?"

Quoth Sonny Boy, "That proves you wild
Or else you 'd know I come
From that great species known as Child
And born to be your chum.

"For I with Shakespeare quite agree
There 's nothing in a name,
And 'Dingo' though you 're called, to me
You 're *doggie*, wild or tame."

EAGLE

THE AMERICAN NATIONAL EMBLEM

OH, noblest bird of all the types
I've seen within the Zoo,
You make me think of stars and stripes
And my hat's off to you!

"For I 'm a-thrill with pride and joy
And happy through and through,
To think that I 'm the Sonny Boy
Of Uncle Sammy, too.

"And though they call you 'Eagle' here
I know a better word,
For, after all, you 're just our dear
Old Yankee Doodle Bird!"

And here 's the tail piece! So it ends,
As everything must do.
May all of Sonny's little friends
Who 've read these pages through,
Drift down the slumber stream that wends
Into a dreamland Zoo!

CENTRAL CIRCULATION
CHILDREN'S ROOM